

## Message Text

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C O N F I D E N T I A L ATHENS 0530

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINS GR

SUBJ: ELEFTHEROS COSMOS EDITORIAL PROMPTS JUDICIAL ACTION  
AGAINST PUBLISHER AND COLUMNIST

1. AS A RESULT OF AN EDITORIAL PUBLISHED JANUARY 16 IN  
RIGHT-WING ELEFTHEROS COSMOS, JUDICIAL ACTION HAS BEEN BROUGHT  
AGAINST BOTH THAT PAPER'S OWNER (AND EDITORIAL WRITER) AND  
ITS PUBLISHER. OWNER/EDITORIAL WRITER SAVVAS CONSTANTOPOULOS  
AND PUBLISHER PANDELIS WERE ARRESTED THE EVENING OF  
JANUARY 16 (CONSTANTOPOULOS WAS RELEASED FOR MEDICAL  
REASONS PENDING THE TRIAL) AND WILL BE TRIED BEFORE A  
THREE-MEMBER COURT OF MISDEMEANORS IN ATHENS ON JANUARY 20  
ON CHARGES OF DISRESPECT FOR AUTHORITY AND SPREADING FALSE  
REPORTS IN VIOLATION OF THE PENAL CODE.

2. THE JANUARY 16 EDITORIAL ALLEGED THAT BOTH THE GOVERNMENT  
AND THE OPPOSITION ARE COLLABORATING IN A CAMPAIGN  
AGAINST THE ARMED FORCES, EACH WITH ITS OWN METHODS AND  
FOR ITS OWN PURPOSES. THE EDITORIAL ALSO ALLEGED THAT  
JUDICIAL AUTHORITY WAS ALSO BEING ATTACKED BY THE  
POLITICAL PARTIES AND THAT SUCH ACTIVITY CONSTITUTED MUTINY  
AGAINST THE CONSTITUTION.

3. MINISTER OF NATIONAL DEFENSE AVEROFF WAS QUICK TO  
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REFUTE THE EDITORIAL, STATING ON THE EVENING OF JANUARY 16

THAT IT WAS BOTH "SLANDEROUS AND ANTI-NATIONAL." HE ALLEGED THAT THE GOVERNMENT HAD NOT ONLY ALWAYS STRONGLY DEFENDED THE PRESTIGE AND UNITY OF THE ARMED FORCES BUT HAD IN PRACTICE DEMONSTRATED ITS AFFECTION FOR THEM. HE ACCUSED ELEFTHEROS COSMOS OF ATTEMPTING TO SHAKE THE CONFIDENCE OF THE MILITARY OFFICERS IN DEMOCRACY AND TO CULTIVATE AMONG THEM A "JUNTAIST MENTALITY." HE CHARACTERIZED ELEFTHEROS COSMOS AS BEING "NOSTALGIC FOR THE DICTATORSHIP." IN A RELATED STATEMENT BY A GOVERNMENT SOURCE, IT WAS ASSERTED THAT THE GOG HAD NOT ONLY ALWAYS RESPECTED JUSTICE (I.E. JUDICIAL AUTHORITY) BUT HAD STRONGLY DEFENDED ITS PRESTIGE AND INDEPENDENCE AGAINST ALL ATTACKS OR ATTEMPTS TO DIMINISH ITS STATURE REGARDLESS OF THE SOURCE OF SUCH ATTACKS.

4. THE SPEED AND THE NATURE OF THE GOG RESPONSE TO THE ELEFTHEROS COSMOS EDITORIAL DEMONSTRATES THE CONTINUED SENSITIVITY OF THE GOG CONCERNING ITS RELATIONS WITH THE ARMED FORCES. SINCE JULY 1974 ELEFTHEROS COSMOS HAS BEEN THE ONLY ATHENS NEWSPAPER WHICH COULD BE CHARACTERIZED AS "SYMPATHETIC" TO THE FORMER MILITARY REGIME. THE GOG IS UNDERSTANDABLY ANXIOUS TO PREVENT ANY BUILD-UP OF NOSTALGIA OR SENTIMENT FOR THE JUNTA ON THE PART OF ACTIVE DUTY MILITARY OFFICERS, AND PROBABLY SAW THIS EDITORIAL AS AN OPPORTUNITY TO WARN ELEFTHEROS COSMOS (AND, BY EXTENSION, OTHERS) AGAINST ANY FUTURE ARTICLES OF THIS CHARACTER WHILE AT THE SAME TIME HERALDING TO THE NATION, THROUGH THE REMARKS OF THE DEFENSE MINISTER, ITS OWN RESPECT AND SUPPORT FOR THE OFFICER CORPS. SEVERAL PROMINENT RETIRED MILITARY OFFICERS HAVE ANNOUNCED THEY WILL TESTIFY FOR THE PROSECUTION IN THIS CASE.  
KUBISCH

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